

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9-11, 13, and 14 are now pending in the application. Claims 2, 4, 6, 8, and 12 have been cancelled; and Claims 1, 9-11, 13, and 14 have been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kado* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,236,042) in view of *Kroetsch* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,904,206). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 13 and 14 have been amended to include the limitations of Claim 2. As discussed below, regarding the rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Applicant is filing a certified translation of the priority document to remove one of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 references.

Thus, Applicant believes Claims 1, 13 and 14, as amended, patentably distinguish over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 3, 5, 7, and 11, which ultimately depend from Claim 1, are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record.

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 4, 6, 8-10, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kado* in view of *Sugimoto et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,357,521). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the ***Sugimoto et al.***, the ***Sugimoto et al.*** reference has a U.S. filing date (102(e) date) of March 24, 2000. Both the ***Sugimoto et al.*** reference and the present application are assigned to DENSO Corporation. The Assignment in the present application was recorded on Reel 011932, Frame 0306. Effective November 29, 1999, subject matter which was prior art under former 35 U.S.C. § 103 via 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is now disqualified as prior art against the claimed invention if that subject matter and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person. Because both applications are assigned, and under an obligation to be assigned, to DENSO, Applicant believes ***Sugimoto et al.*** is not a proper 35 U.S.C. § 103 reference.

Enclosed for filing in this application is an English language translation of the priority document of the present application, along with a statement that this is a true and accurate translation, for perfecting the priority claim of October 25, 1999 for the present application. This perfected priority claim is believed to be prior to the ***Sugimoto et al.*** reference and/or its publication and, thus, the ***Sugimoto et al.*** reference is not a valid 35 U.S.C. § 103 reference.

Thus, Applicant believes Claim 1, which now includes the limitations of Claim 2, patentably distinguish over the art of record. Claims, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 12 have been cancelled. Claim 10 has been amended to depend from Claim 1.

Claim 9 has been amended to independent form to include the limitations of Claim 1. Applicant believes the ***Sugimoto et al.*** reference is not a valid 35 U.S.C. § 103 reference as discussed above. Thus, Applicant believes Claim 9 patentably distinguish over the art of record.

Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

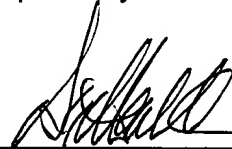
CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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